

1948

Following negotiations which have extended over a period of one and one half years, it now appears that the acquisition of the buildings on our 21 acre campus as a permanent home for Palm Beach Junior College, is soon to be a reality.

An advertisement offering the buildings for sale for "on site use" and containing a provision that the purchaser must make arrangement for the use of the land with the County Commission of Palm Beach County, who are the actual owners of the site, appeared in the Palm Beach Post on Monday, October 18, 1948. Inasmuch as the Board of Public Instruction has already been given a 10 year lease on our campus by the County Commission, it seems fairly certain, with our priority position, that we will be the successful bidders for "our million dollar campus" and that, perhaps on October 29, 1948 we will be the new owners of the 46 buildings in our campus area.

The anticipated culmination of the long period of negotiation in the very near future will bring the realization of long cherished dreams. From the initial stages, when the acquisition of the buildings was definitely only a dream or an idea, the Board of Public Instruction has received splendid cooperation from local organizations and government agencies. When the Board of Public Instruction first indicated an interest in acquiring a permanent home for Palm Beach Junior College at Morrison Field, they soon learned that others were already interested in certain sections or buildings in the area which appeared to ^{be} ideally suited to college use. This was especially true of Palm Beach Post #12 of the American Legion who had started negotiations to acquire the former officers' club. With the entry of the Board of Public Instruction into the picture the American Legion, in a very gracious gesture, withdrew in favor of the plans which the Board was developing for Palm Beach Junior College.

With the first hurdle removed, for the officers' club was one of the most essential buildings in the plans for the development of the college, the Board of Public Instruction initiated the negotiations which appear to be nearing their final stage within the next few days.

Continued negotiations, prosecuted by the Board of Public Instruction at considerable expense, were successful in due time with Mr. G. J. Hardy, County Director of Vocational Education, and the County Superintendent handled the tremendous number of details incident to the acquiring of an interim permit for the use and occupancy of the property by the college.

With the receipt of a lease from the United States government, which was granted about a year ago, for the use and occupancy of the buildings, and the cooperation of the County Commission in matters pertaining to the use of the land for educational purposes, the Board authorized the County Superintendent to begin the task of altering the various buildings for use as classrooms, laboratories, library, etc., in order that the college, sorely pressed for space in its former location, might use the new facilities. The work was completed and the college, students and faculty as well as physical properties, moved to the beautiful campus where, in buildings which proved to be easily adapted to educational use, classes were held for the first time at the beginning of the second semester on February 7, 1948.

The repair and upkeep of the college buildings, with continuing improvements which facilitate the work of the college, together with a splendid program of maintenance for the extensive grounds, have all added to the natural beauty and attractiveness of the college campus.

In spite of three hurricanes, with attendant damage to roofs and shrubbery, the campus has evolved into one of the real beauty spots in an area of Florida where beauty abounds.

Palm Beach Junior College has taken the fullest advantage of the splendid facilities which are soon to be our very own. The student enrollment during the present college year is twenty per cent above last year---and this comes at a time when many colleges are beginning to note a decline in their enrollment figures.

With the acquisition of the buildings, further plans for the growth and development of the college will soon be in the making. Many are awaiting the final word from the War Assets Administration as to the outcome of our bid. When this comes, Palm Beach Junior College will accelerate the task of becoming one of the great educational institutions of Florida.

With a sympathetic Board of Public Instruction, an intensely interested Advisory Committee, an enthusiastic faculty, and loyal and devoted student body and alumni, we cannot help, with such impetus but attain that goal.

* * * * *